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Villa Landscapes in the Roman North

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND LIFESTYLES

EDITORS

NICO ROYMANS & TON DERKS

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Town-country dynamics in Roman Gaul. The epigraphy of the ruling elite

Ton Derks

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- 2 Composition and size of the *ordo decurionum*
- 3 Urban *domus* and villas
- 4 Rural properties and burial places
- 5 Bonds of friendship and patronage
- 6 Conclusions

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I INTRODUCTION

In the western half of the Roman empire, the foundation of towns and the introduction of a system of civic self-administration constitute the most important changes of the Roman era, alongside the rise of villas.¹ The precise organisation of the new administration differed from *civitas* to *civitas* as in most cases it was partly built upon existing indigenous structures. However, as a result of a process of political integration, referred to in the recent literature as ‘municipalisation’,² the institutional organisation of the local communities developed along much the same lines and finally became fairly uniform across the Gallic and Germanic provinces. Everywhere the old tribal senate of elders was transformed into a Roman-style city council, variously referred to as *senatus*, *curia* or, most often, *ordo decurionum*.³ The tribal *pagus* lost its political autonomy and was subordinated to the *civitas*, its significance in the Roman period being largely restricted to the religious domain.⁴ And single magisterial positions rooted in local tradition, such as the *vergobretus* and *praetor* in Central Gaul or the *summus magistratus* among the Batavi,⁵ quickly disappeared and were replaced by the archetypical collegial pairs of *duumviri*, *aediles* and *quaestores*. It is these municipal magistrates, together with the members of the city council with whom they were closely connected, which are the focus of this paper. They are referred to here as the ‘ruling elite’. Who were these men? How many of them were there?

¹ Both developments are inextricably intertwined. Cf. Whittaker 1990, 116, who states that ‘villas were primarily, although not of necessity, an urban phenomenon (...), a phenomenon of a central *civitas* town’.

² Dondin-Payre 1999, esp. 127.

³ Cf. *RE* IV, 1901, col. 2319–2352, *s.v.* *decurio*, esp. 2319–2322 [Kübler]; Dondin-Payre 1999, 159–161.

⁴ Wolff 1976, esp. 117; Roymans 1990, 19 ff, esp. 21;

Raepsaet-Charlier 1998, 177–179.

⁵ For useful reviews of the evidence, Dondin-Payre 1999, 150–153; Lamoine 2009, 106–134; Roymans 2004, 63–64, 200–202. These ‘traditional’ offices probably represent a first stage in the process of municipalisation and may be more Roman than often acknowledged. Cf. Dondin-Payre 2003, 147.

What evidence do we have to substantiate the general claim that they may be identified with the wealthy owners of the greatest and most luxurious villas in the countryside? How much of their time did they have to spend on exercising their political power? How did they manage to run an agrarian enterprise and at the same time be politically active in town? Should we imagine them constantly commuting between their estate in the countryside and the political arena in the town? Or were they absentee landlords who, like their peers in Italy, lived in town and relied on a bailiff? And where in the end did their loyalties and sympathies most lie – with the town or the countryside? These and other questions spring to mind when trying to conceptualise the social and political relations that tied the Roman villa world to that of the town.

Let me be clear right from the start: the available evidence will not allow us to provide definitive answers to all of these questions in the next few pages. Unlike the situation for Italy or the Spanish province of Baetica, which have produced a rich dataset of literary or legal documents shedding light on the life of the ruling elite,⁶ apart from the Constantinian decree allowing the council of Cologne to call Jews to political engagement in the local *ordo*,⁷ we have no legal sources at all for the northwestern provinces. And as far as the literary evidence is concerned, we have to make do with just a few snapshots, which moreover are of a comparatively late (4th- or even 5th-century) date. Thus what has generally been offered so far are inferences based largely on analogical reasoning, using the evidence from the Italian peninsula and the Mediterranean provinces as a model. The question of whether we can validly apply the ‘Italic model’ of town-country dynamics to the villa landscapes of the northern provinces has virtually never been asked, let alone been answered satisfactorily.⁸

Although inscriptions from the research area may be a more direct source of information than textual evidence from Italy, they are not without their problems either. They are few in number and have an uneven geographical distribution; they are more numerous in some *civitates* than others⁹ and, following a general characteristic of epigraphic culture, are more often found in urban contexts than in the countryside.¹⁰ They also suffer from a chronological bias with many more inscriptions dated in the 2nd and 3rd centuries than in the 1st. Finally, the content is often formal and stereotypic and thus of reduced informational value.¹¹ The area for which detailed evidence has been collected for this paper (see below) presents no exception to these general trends.

Nevertheless, I believe that by paying special attention to the precise find contexts of the inscriptions, we may still gain some interesting new insights into the ways town and country were linked in this part of the Roman world. In order to get the most out of them, I will adopt an interdisciplinary approach which seeks to integrate historical, epigraphic and archaeological evidence. In line with the geographical framework of the project from which this paper springs, the focus will be on the northern villa landscapes between Bavay in France and Cologne in Germany. But before we start discussing the evidence from the area, a few general words must be said on the organisation of the civic administration (Section 2) and on the ruling elite’s places of residence (Section 3). The aim of these sections is, first, to investigate the validity of the ‘Italic’ model for town-country relations in Roman Gaul and, second, to present a frame of reference for the subsequent interpretation of our data (Sections 4 and 5). For the following two sections the geographical scope has therefore been widened to include the three Gallic and two Germanic provinces.

⁶ One thinks of the correspondence of men like Cicero, Horace and Pliny (cf., for instance, White 2010; Hirth 1985; Sherwin-White 1985) and of the municipal charters of Tarente, Urso and Irni (Crawford 1996, nos. 15 and 25; González/Crawford 1986).

⁷ Eck 2004, 325.

⁸ Slofstra 1983, 84 ff, esp. 85, constitutes an exception in that the question is posed, but not really answered.

⁹ Cf. the map in Dondin-Payre 1999, 133, fig. 1.

¹⁰ Cf., for instance, Wightman 1985, 164, fig. 24; Woolf 1996.

¹¹ Cf. Galsterer 2010, 257 f., who states that in the literary sources ‘often the fullness of life comes to speak’, whereas with inscriptions, ‘one always has the feeling of staying at the surface of municipal life’ (my translation).

It should first be pointed out that all magistrates and *decuriones* exercised power over both the town and country of the *civitas*, on behalf of which they were nominated. Despite the sometimes vast territories of the *civitates*, nothing like a multi-scalar administrative hierarchy existed. Magistrates and councillors had their seats in the civic centre of the town, from which they exercised power over the entire territory of the *civitas*, not just the urban centre.

To be eligible for a municipal magistracy or for a seat in the council, candidates had to meet several legal, moral and financial requirements. They had to be a free-born citizen,¹² of local origin,¹³ free from any allegations of *infamia*,¹⁴ and be able to satisfy property qualifications. Women were excluded from the offices and the council. Given these restrictions, the pool from which the municipal elite could be recruited was often limited. Property criteria differed from one community to another (and perhaps also through time) and related to the community's size and richness. If we are to believe Pliny the Younger, in the early 2nd century AD the lower limit in his home town of Comum was 100,000 sesterces.¹⁵ Even if this figure has no generalising value of itself, in the absence of other relevant data and when compared with the property requirements of 400,000 and 1,000,000 sesterces which applied to knights and senators from the Augustan period onwards,¹⁶ it may provide a rough indication of property limits for municipal elites elsewhere in the empire.¹⁷ With Roman society being pre-dominantly agrarian,¹⁸ most magistrates and councillors will have met such minimum requirements for wealth through the possession of landed property. While this was certainly the most accepted way to fulfil the economic criteria, in many cities there were also those who satisfied the capital requirement thanks to 'new money' that they had earned through trade or transport.¹⁹ Finally, veteran soldiers of the Roman army incidentally turn up as members of the city council or holders of a municipal office. But apart from Roman colonies with veteran settlement (*deductio*), where veterans of ordinary rank may have dominated the local senate, at least in the early years after the colony's foundation,²⁰ former soldiers who obtained magisterial or decurional honours generally remained an exception.²¹

¹² González/Crawford 1986, ch. 54; *CJ* 9.21.1; Mouritsen 2011, 73–75.

¹³ In exceptional cases, non-residents could be coopted. E.g. *CIL* XII 1585, which honours a *flamen divi Augusti* of the Vocontii who had been allected, *nomine incolatus*, into the *ordo* of Lugdunum. For other examples from the Three Gauls, often concerning two neighbouring communities, see Dondin-Payre 2003, 152.

¹⁴ *Infamia* could be brought about by dishonourable discharge from the army, by the pursuit of a 'dishonourable' profession such as actor, gladiator, pimp or prostitute, by conviction for criminal offence or by condemnation in particular civil cases. Cf. *Dig.* 3.2; 48.7.1; 50.2.12; *RE* IX, 1916, col. 1537–1540, s.v. *infamia* [Pfaff].

¹⁵ Plin., *Ep.* 1.19.

¹⁶ Nicolet 1976; Demougin 1988, 76–79.

¹⁷ Cf. Jacques/Scheid 1998, 275 f.; Duncan-Jones 1974, 147 f.; Eck 2004, 315 f.; Galsterer 2010, 258.

¹⁸ On the limited volume of artisan production and trade in the ancient economy, see the classic discussion on the consumer city in Finley 1977; Whittaker 1990.

¹⁹ For the Batavians, for instance, a councillor who had

amassed a fortune by trade or shipping is documented by two votive altars dedicated to Nehalennia. Stuart/Bogaers 2001, B37 and B63.

²⁰ Cf. the etymology of 'decurio' in *Dig.* 50.16.239.5: *decima pars eorum qui ducerentur consilii publici gratia conscribi solita est*. Due to the chronological bias of the epigraphic material the presence of veterans in the magistracies and *ordines* of the Roman colonies at Cologne and Xanten is almost invisible; the only exception is Appendix 1, no. 1 (see the comment by H. Galsterer in *IKöln*² 286). The epigraphic habit was still burgeoning in the early decades of the colonies, whereas in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries, when inscriptions abound, the composition of the colony's population and its administration had become much more heterogeneous.

²¹ Cf. Wesch-Klein 1998, 196–200, who argues that the contribution of veterans to the civic administration of the communities they settled in has often been overestimated (however, see preceding note). Those who did serve their community as office-holders or councillors had most often served in the better paid higher ranks of the legions rather than the *auxilia*.

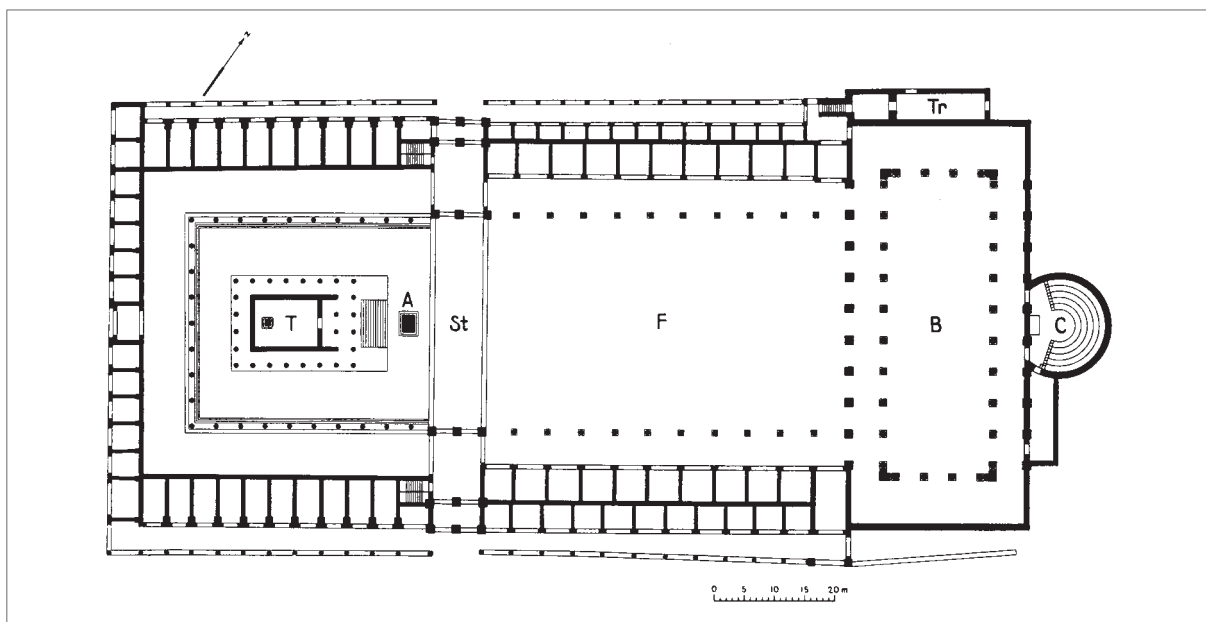


Fig. 1. Plan of the *Hauptforum* of Augusta Raurica with the *curia* (C) attached to the *basilica* (B) (after Balty 1991, 274, fig. 150).

How many seats did the *ordo decurionum* have? A key document for any discussion of the size and composition of the council is the well-known ‘album decurionum’ of Canusium in Southern Italy.²² The inscribed bronze table, which was found in 1675 in the ruins of what was presumably the towns’ council chamber, lists in four carefully laid-out columns the names of all ordinary and honorary council members active in AD 223, the date of publication. The first column lists the names of the honorary members who had been officially appointed civic patrons of the town – first 31 of senatorial rank (*clarissimi viri*), then eight of equestrian rank (*equites romani*). The last column mentions 25 *praetextati*, young nobles generally under 25 who were waiting their turn, hoping to become full council members in the near future, and who for the time being were permitted to attend the council, albeit without speaking or voting rights.²³ If we subtract these 64 names from the total number of 164, the actual *ordo* came to exactly 100 members. Apart from the much-discussed category of the *pedani* (to which we will soon return)²⁴ and four members who had entered the council directly by *allectio* into the magisterial rank of *duumvir quinquennialicius*,²⁵ all council members

²² *CIL* IX 338. For an excellent account, Salway 2000.

²³ On the *praetextati*, see the discussion in Mouritsen 1998, 239 f. and Laes 2004, 154, 179, who rightly distinguishes between the young councillors under the age of 25 being coopted for exceptional reasons (*ex causa*) as full members of the council (*adlecti*), despite the legal age limit of 25, and the larger separate group of *praetextati*, who functioned as a first natural reserve to replenish any vacancies. Whereas the former group comprised quite a few minors who were under 14, some as young as 4 (!) years old (cf. Laes 2004, 176–177, table 8), the latter generally must have reached the age of legal adulthood and will have worn the *toga virilis*. The title *praetextati* is thus to be explained by reference to the *toga praetexta* worn by

magistrates and points to these backbenchers’ ambition of holding office soon. Cf. the sons of senators who were permitted to wear the *tunica lato clavo* and attend meetings of the senate before they had held any senatorial office; for this, Suet., *Aug.* 38.2; Nicolet 1976, 34. For the imperial age limit of 25 for entry to magistracies or the local council, see *Dig.* 50.4.8; González/Crawford, ch. 54 (*lex Malacitana*) and the discussion in Laes 2004, 158 ff.

²⁴ *Pedani* turns out to be a *hapax*, derived from *pedaneus*, itself perhaps a corruption of *pedarius*. Mouritsen 1998, 230, note 4; Taylor/Scott 1969, 548–557.

²⁵ Mouritsen 1998, 241; Salway 2000, 124.



Fig. 2. Photograph of the restored seating space of the *curia* of Augusta Raurica with on the left the podium for the chairs of the *duumviri* presiding over the council meeting (author's photograph).

were former magistrates.²⁶ In keeping with legal prescriptions,²⁷ the magistracies – normally held for one year with the possibility of one or more renewals – are listed in descending rank, according to the dignity and responsibilities connected with the office. The *duumviri quinquennales*, who were nominated every fifth year of a censorial cycle with the special task of conducting the census (and renewing the *ordo*),²⁸ head the list, followed by the ‘ordinary’ *Ilviri* (i.e. *iure dicundo*) who held office in one of the other four years of the census period. The *duumviri*, regardless of whether they had the special power of censorship, presided over the deliberations in the council and were charged with jurisdiction and holding elections. Next are the *aediles*, who were responsible for public order, religious buildings and festivals, the inspection of weights and measures, and the markets. The fourth group of magistrates are the *quaestores*, to whom the community's public finances were entrusted.²⁹ Concluding the core list of 100 men are the *pedani*, who held no office and were lowest in rank. The fact that the names of the *quinquennales* charged with the publication of the album are mentioned twice – once in the heading of the inscription and once in final position under the *quinquennialicii* – suggests that the listing within each category observed the rule of seniority.³⁰ Although nominally all councillors had to be re-elected every five years, notwithstanding exceptional cases (e.g. when a *decurio* had lost his good reputation), it was standard practice for most *decuriones* to occupy a seat for their life-time.³¹

²⁶ This is clear from the *-icius* suffix in the headings of the office titles that precede their names: *quinquennialicii*, *Ilviralicii*, *aedilicii*, *quaestoricii*.

²⁷ Cf. *Dig.* 50.3.1.

²⁸ Salway 2000, 121, with further references in note 20.

²⁹ For the responsibilities connected with the offices, see

the stipulations in the legal charters of the Colonia Genetiva Iulia (Crawford 1996, no. 25) and the Municipium Irnitum (González/Crawford 1986, ch. 18–29).

³⁰ This again is in accordance with the legal prescriptions. Cf. *Dig.* 50.3.1; Salway 2000, 125.

³¹ *CJ* 10.32.8–10.32.294 and *CTh* 16.1.2–16.1.380.

The crucial question is, of course, to what extent this unique document may be considered representative of the *ordines* in other towns. Although the album of Canusium has long been taken as evidence for a standard *ordo* size of 100 members, recent research has increasingly shown that this cannot be the case.³² First, like the property requirement for entry to the council, the size of the *ordo* seems to have been dependent upon the size and prosperity of the community. Canusium was a thriving Roman colony that was promoted to this status only in AD 160.³³ We can expect smaller and less prosperous communities to have had a smaller *ordo*; for some, this has been established with certainty. Thanks to the discovery of the *lex Irnitana*, for instance, we know that the council of Irni, a small community in Baetica,³⁴ comprised no more than 63 members, in accordance with an old custom that went back to before the promotion to *municipium*. Only 30 members are documented for the small Italian town of Castrimoenium, and a similar size has been argued for the council of Petelia in Bruttium.³⁵ In short, even if many communities did have an *ordo* of 100 councillors,³⁶ the cited examples show that there was room for flexibility.

Based on the fact that it was published in bronze instead of the usual whitened wax tablet (*tabula dealbata* or album),³⁷ a second argument has recently been suggested as to why the album ^{of} Canusium cannot be representative. The financial investment and care associated with making lengthy inscriptions in a durable medium like bronze means that this type of publication was reserved for documents that were important for the collective memory of the community. We may conclude from this that the publication of the album in 223 AD was no routine task, but related to a special circumstance or occasion deserving of preservation for the collective memory of the community. Based on the large number of *pedani* (32),³⁸ Salway proposes the unprovable but attractive hypothesis that the reason was a special *beneficium* of an imperial grant allowing the Canusine council to increase the maximum permitted number of decurions to 100. Such an imperial *beneficium* commemorated by the production of the bronze album would account for the unusually high number of councillors without any administrative experience.³⁹ If this suggestion proves to be correct, this means that the council of Canusium also initially had fewer than 100 members.

The above gives us every reason to assume, also for the *ordines* of the communities in the northwestern provinces, that there was no fixed size but rather a considerable variation in time and space. Paradoxically, for the communities for which we have concrete information, the data suggests that their councils were larger than 100 men! According to Caesar, the senate of the Nervii consisted of 600 members, all of whom –with three exceptions – were killed in battle.⁴⁰ A comparison with the *ordo* of Canusium, together with the war context of Caesar's report, could suggest that this was a case of rhetorical exaggeration. I am inclined to attach more credence to Tacitus' statement that by the end of the 1st century the council of the Treveri had at least 113 members, which was the size of just the pro-Roman faction.⁴¹ Lastly, the archaeological remains of the *curia* of the colonia Augusta Raurica in Augst suggest that the senate of the Rauracenses had at least 100 members in the mid 2nd century. According to older calculations, the five concentric steps on which the seats of the *decuriones* were arranged during council meetings (figs. 1 and

³² Cf. Nicols 1988; Mouritsen 1998, 231 ff.

³³ Salway 2000, 118–120.

³⁴ Galsterer 2010, 263, assumes for this town a territory of about 50 km² and a few thousand inhabitants.

³⁵ Duncan-Jones 1974, 284.

³⁶ To cite one example for which this size has been proven, the senate of the Colonia Iulia Genetiva had 100 members. Cf. Crawford 1996, no. 25, ch. 75, 97 and 126 (with comment on p. 399).

³⁷ Salway 2000, 121. Cf. also Eck 2004, 321.

³⁸ Mouritsen 1998, 238–241.

³⁹ Salway 2000, 169.

⁴⁰ Caesar, BG 2.28.

⁴¹ Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.19: *centum tredecim Treverorum senatores*. Cf. Chilver/Townend 1985, 100, who remark that this is 'a curiously precise number, evidently to emphasize the number of senators still remaining after defections.' Tacitus gives no information on the size of the defected anti-Roman faction in the senate of the Treveri.

2) had space for 98 seats. With two seats for the presidents on the rectangular podium (1.74 m x 3.05 m) on the floor in front of the semicircle, this brings us to the round number of 100.⁴² However, if we use the standard space per seat that is generally adopted as the norm for ancient theatres, the number of available seats and thus the size of the council is nearly doubled.⁴³

Contrasting with such prosperous communities that boasted a large territory and a large council were small and poor *civitates* with a much smaller council. Ranking among them for certain at the empire's northern periphery were the Cananefates, the Batavi and the Menapii,⁴⁴ and possibly also the Traianenses. The territories of these *civitates* (at least the first three) were comparatively small and the less fertile soils meant there were fewer opportunities for amassing a fortune through landed property and arable farming.⁴⁵ Villas are hardly known here and those that have been identified are generally small.⁴⁶ The widely-held view that the municipal elite consisted of a class of rich landowners who lived in sumptuous houses of the axial type cannot therefore apply here. In less prosperous communities the council must have been smaller or the census for municipal offices significantly lower.

3 URBAN DOMUS AND VILLAS

The political work of the ruling elite, especially the ruling magistrates, required them to be in town on virtually a permanent basis. In addition to council deliberations,⁴⁷ they were expected to attend a range of ceremonial occasions, such as religious festivals, distributions of food or money, sacrifices, offerings, banquets etc. The texts of the municipal laws clearly show that office-holders were allowed to leave the city (i.e. the *civitas*) but had to nominate a replacement (*praefectus*) in the event of a lengthy absence. From the provisions in these laws regarding the quorum needed for council decisions, we can gather that it was not uncommon for not all the members to attend council meetings. We do not know how often and what proportion of council members failed to appear, but it seems that *decuriones* could shirk their obligations in this regard more easily than magistrates.

If we have to assume that most magistrates and councillors were landlords who owned one or more rural estates, all of them possessed a town house, an urban *domus*. Provisions in the late republican municipal laws of Tarente in southern Italy and Urso in the province of Baetica show that maintaining a home in these towns was not a matter of free choice for council members and office-holders, but a legal duty. These laws obliged those who did not already own a house in town to do so within a set period once elected to the position of magistrate or councillor.⁴⁸ Although such charters have been preserved for only a few towns, it is generally assumed that similar laws with comparable regulations also existed elsewhere.⁴⁹

⁴² Laur-Belart 1937, 34, assuming a space per seat of 90 cm. For all measures concerning the seating space as well as a balanced discussion of the dating of the curia's second construction phase to c. AD 145 (which fits in nicely with that of the *Hauptforum*: Bedon/Chevallier/Pinon 1988, 225 f.), one should now consult Balty 1991, 271 ff.

⁴³ Cf. Balty 1991, 273, note 80, which gives a space per seat of 40–50 cm.

⁴⁴ Buijtdorp 2010, 852, recently assumed for the Cananefates an *ordo* of 30 members.

⁴⁵ Roymans 1996, 72–84; Galsterer 1999, 266–267; Schalles 1995, 426; idem 2001. See also above, note 19.

⁴⁶ Habermehl 2011, 110, fig. 4.7.

⁴⁷ All changes to the layout or ownership of public space needed the approval of the council. For a general impression of other topics dealt with by the *ordo*, cf. Sherk 1970, esp. 73 ff; Parma 2003.

⁴⁸ *CIL* I 590 = *ILS* 6086 = Crawford, no. 15, ll. 26–28 (*Lex Tarentina*); *CIL* II.5, 439 = Crawford 1996, 393 ff, no. 25, c. 91 (*Lex Ursonensis*).

⁴⁹ For Cologne, cf. Eck 2004, 315. Internal evidence to support this is the fact that the laws that have come down to us make only sporadic mention by name of the town to which they applied; many articles only refer to the community in general terms (*municipium, colonia*) that could have been used for any other town.

These town houses of the decurial elite may have been *pieds-à-terre* that were barely distinguishable in archaeological terms from other houses; this will have been particularly true of the homes of backbenchers. The most powerful men, however, had a sumptuous dwelling designed with domestic spaces that were suitable for receptions and audiences, political meetings in smaller circles, and personal archives and libraries. The physical remains of such large, luxurious town houses, often with peristyles and floor areas ranging from 1500 to 3500 m², have been unearthed by urban archaeologists in almost every *civitas* capital in the villa landscapes where large-scale excavations have been carried out.⁵⁰

Thus although all the men of importance in the *civitas* were urban residents by obligation, living in town quickly became very attractive. Outside the council room, this was where the ruling elite met their social peers. And even in the Roman period the town was the place *par excellence* where a wide range of new cultural phenomena made their first appearance. For those wishing to belong not just to the political but the cultural elite, the town with its amenities and constant supply of new and exotic products was the ideal location.

Living in an urban centre also meant that the politically engaged landowning elite had to cope with the conflicting interests of their *negotia publica* in the town and the private affairs of their estate in the countryside. Several options were open to them: leasing large parts of their property to tenants, entrusting the management of their estate to an *actor* or a *vilicus*, or a combination of the two.⁵¹ This model is supported by rich epigraphic evidence and epistolary exchanges from Italy,⁵² but several inscriptions from Gaul and Germany⁵³ and a few mentions in letters⁵⁴ by Gallic nobles attest to the fact that business managers acting on behalf of absentee landlords were not unknown in the villa landscapes of the Gallic and Germanic provinces.

A recurring theme in the correspondence between Cicero and Pliny the Younger is the escape from the bustle of the town and the attraction of life in the country. Thanks to the requirement to own at least one house in town and one in the country, the ruling elite could at set times exchange the hectic and noisy town life for a peaceful sojourn in the country. For this part of the 'Italic model', the most detailed and explicit description we have for Gaul comes from the 4th-century rhetorician and poet Ausonius. After ten years at the imperial court in Trier, where he worked as tutor to the young Gratian, he had returned to his *patria* Burdigala, where he inherited the small suburban ancestral property (*villula*) on the death of his father. In the short poem *De herediolo*, Ausonius sings the praises of the estate that had been in his family for generations. The concluding verses are worth citing in full: 'This my estate lies not far from the town, nor yet hard by

⁵⁰ Cf., generally, the excellent paper by Vipard 2007. For the state of affairs regarding excavations in the urban centres of Northern Gaul, Brulet 1996 and Hanoune 2007, and, specifically for the research area, Vanderhoeven *et al.* 1992 (with English summary); Eck 2004, 378–385 (with older literature in ch. 11, note 2); Kienzle 2008. Even with only 10% of the town's surface having been excavated, the absence so far of sumptuous urban *domus* in Xanten is noteworthy.

⁵¹ On the likely combination of tenancy and agency, Aubert 1994, chapter 3; on *actores* and *vilici* of agricultural estates generally, Aubert 1994, 132 ff.

⁵² Cf. Février 1981; Mattusch 2005, 3–12.

⁵³ Inscriptions from Gaul mentioning agricultural business managers: *CIL* XIII 2243 (Lugdunum): *actor praediorum horum*; *CIL* XIII 2533 (Amezyieu, territory of the Ambarri): *actor fundi Ammatiaci b(onorum) Flavi Stratonis*.

Apart from *CIL* XIII 4352 (Metz): *vil(icus)*, for which we cannot be certain whether it refers to a *vilicus* of a farm or of an enterprise in town, there are no inscriptions of agricultural *vilici* from Gaul. An inscription in the floor mosaic in the entrance hall of the villa of Laufenburg mentions a *cliens* who seems to have acted as business manager (see below, note 72). The inscription from Bavay (*CIL* XIII 3572) has not been included; with Dondin-Payre 2003, 150 and Lamoine 2009, 326, note 139, I read *vilicus* there as the cognomen of the inscription's dedicant, named Q. Titius Vilicus. I will discuss the inscription in the next section.

⁵⁴ In a letter addressed to his friend Paulinus of Nola, Ausonius complains about the incompetence of his *vilicus*. For references and discussion, see Aubert 1994, 141–143.

the town, to rid me of its crowds while reaping its advantages. And so, whenever satiety moves me to change my seat, I pass from one to the other, and enjoy country and town by turns'.⁵⁵ This and similar passages in other late antique Gallic writing, especially that of Sidonius Apollinaris, show that the classical model of frequent travel and changes of residence between town and country still applied in 4th- and 5th-century Gaul, suggesting that a tradition introduced in the early imperial period still persisted.⁵⁶

4 RURAL PROPERTIES AND BURIAL PLACES

Let us now turn to the data concerning the ruling elite in the research area. Inscriptions mentioning magistrates and decurions from the Nervii, Tungri, Traianenses and Agrippinenses have been gathered for this paper. There are no such inscriptions for the Cugerni and Ubii, on whose territories the Colonia Ulpia Traiana and Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium were founded in the 1st century. A striking feature is the uneven geographical distribution as well as the widely varying numbers that have been preserved for the four communities, with many times more inscriptions for the Agrippinenses and Traianenses than for the Tungri and Nervii (fig. 3 and Appendices 1–4). This is most likely due to the different epigraphic habits in the Roman frontier zone and hinterland.

Despite these inherent limitations and distortions of the dataset, how can we exploit it to say something about the ties that bound the municipal elite to the countryside in this particular part of the empire?⁵⁷ First, we will use the geographical information of the findspots to identify possible rural properties of the ruling elite. Inscriptions found in secondary contexts do, of course, have to be treated with caution since their findspots only provide approximate indications. This is especially true for inscriptions reused in medieval contexts, which may have been transported over larger distances than spolia from the Late Roman period, as well as for texts found in or near the town since in those cases a rural origin from a suburban villa or sanctuary may be obscured by the secondary urban context. Second, we will use the nature of the inscriptions (funerary, votive, honorary or building inscription) in combination with archaeological information about find contexts to discuss the type of bonds linking the municipal aristocracy with the countryside.

In this section, we will use the evidence of the funerary inscriptions for a discussion on burial places of the municipal elite. If all decurions and magistrates were obliged to own a town house, and most of them had one or more residences in the countryside as well, this generally gave them at least two options for their choice of a final resting place – along one of the arterial roads leading out of town or on one of their rural properties. What preferences do we observe and what considerations may have motivated magistrates and decurions to choose a particular option?

A first observation to be made is that since the final resting place will have been partly determined by the individual life course and career path, not all members of the decurial elite will have had the same freedom of choice at the end of their life. There was little choice for the surviving relatives of magistrates who had seen a brilliant political career and were decreed, in reward for their services to the community (*ob merita*), the honour of a public funeral, a burial plot at public expense or even a funerary monument paid by the *civitas*. As far as we can tell, reception of such honours always went hand in hand with burial outside the walls of the town. There are no examples from the research area of men who received such municipal *beneficia*, the nearest instance being a scion of the famous Camilli family from the Helvetian capital at Avenches whose funeral was jointly paid for by the Haedui and his home community.⁵⁸ As the

⁵⁵ Ausonius, *De herediolo* 29–32. Translation H.G. Evelyn White (Loeb).

⁵⁶ Goodman 2007, 226 ff. esp. 227 f. (with notes 178–179), who provides further references and some pertinent

source-critical remarks.

⁵⁷ For the method, compare Février 1981, 360.

⁵⁸ *CIL* XIII 5110. The evidence for the practice has been usefully collected by Wesch-Klein 1993, 196–200.

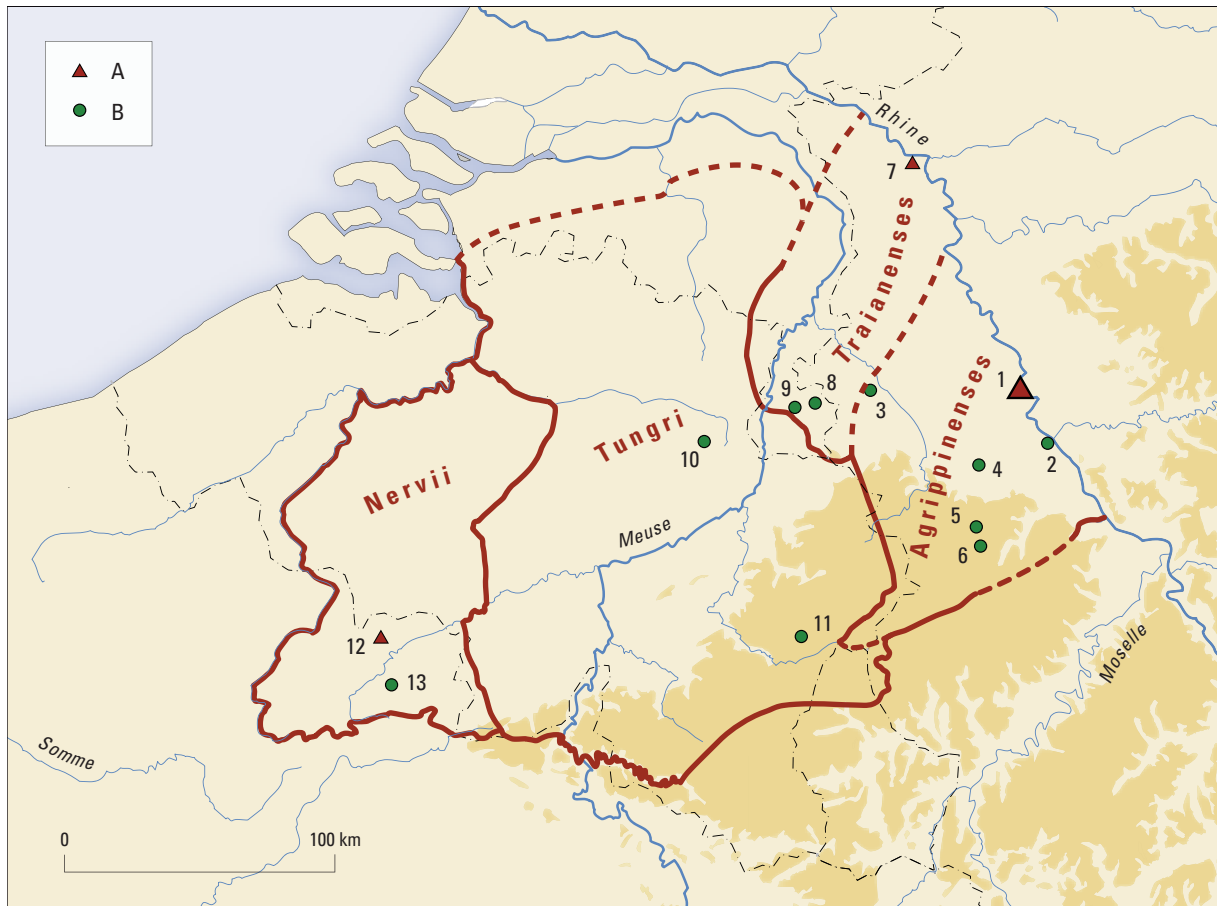


Fig. 3. Distribution of inscriptions mentioning magistrates or councillors of the Agrippinenses, Traianenses, Tungri and Nervii. A urban finds; B rural finds (large symbol: more than 5 inscriptions).

1 Cologne; 2 Bonn; 3 Gereonsweiler; 4 Zülpich-Hoven; 5 Nettersheim; 6 Blankenheim; 7 Xanten; 8 Heerlen; 9 Valkenburg-Ravensbos; 10 Gors-Opleeuw; 11 Vaux-les-Cherain; 12 Bavay; 13 Saint-Hilaire-sur-Helpe-Fuchau

bestowal of such honours by the local *ordo decurionum* will have been exceptional, such circumstances only applied to a highly select group. Those who received these privileges probably happily enjoyed them and after an entire life centred around the town felt no remorse at being deprived of the alternative.

Similarly, veteran soldiers and *negotiatores* who had settled in town and acquired a seat in the town council only after, or in the final phase of, their professional career might not have had much choice either. Though some of these councillors may have invested in a rural property, most will have had no bonds with the surrounding countryside at all and will have opted for interment in one of the urban cemeteries. Again, such councillors will have formed only a tiny minority of most senates.⁵⁹ An example from Cologne is the anonymous *duumvir* who was inscribed in the Voturian tribe and must therefore have come originally from Ostia, Placentia or Bergomum in Italy. He was most probably a veteran soldier or officer.⁶⁰

If the cases discussed so far are rather exceptional, how might the majority of councillors have looked at the issue? Since burying the dead within the perimeter of the city walls was legally prohibited, opting for a burial place in an urban cemetery meant that the funeral monument would be spatially separated from the decurion's urban house. In contrast to interment on a rural property, the choice of a tomb just outside the town gates required considerable additional investment in the form of purchasing a burial

⁵⁹ See above, Section 2 with note 21.

⁶⁰ *IKöln*² 286 = Appendix 1, no. 1.

plot. After the first generation of councillors had passed away, the most prominent places will have been taken, resulting in plots at conspicuous locations soon becoming extraordinarily expensive. Against this background, the option of being buried on the main estate in the countryside may have had several advantages. While the location of the burial might have been less desirable (though often still along a road), the plot was free and the tomb itself probably less vulnerable to alienation and destruction. For those who owned a property that had been in the family for generations,⁶¹ the prospect of being buried in ancestral ground might have had an added emotional value. Finally, building an imposing monumental marker also enhanced the symbolic value of the villa as the embodiment of the family's aristocratic status and identity.⁶²

So what choices were made by the decurial elite in our research area? Eight funerary inscriptions mentioning members of the local municipal elite are known from the territory of the Agrippinenses. Most of them (six out of eight) have come to light in the urban centre or its immediate vicinity. Although all of these seem to have been found in a secondary context, there are no reasons to assume that their original primary context was rural rather than urban. Three were already reused in antiquity (Appendix 1, nos 1, 4 and 6) and may have been found not too far away from their original spot. Of the remaining three, one was found in Spellen on the right bank of the Rhine some 100 km downstream from Cologne but is said to have been taken there from the Rhenish capital, and little is known about the find circumstances of the other two. It is hard to interpret the two funerary inscriptions found in the countryside, at Nettersheim and Zülrich, as other than approximate indications for the location of decurial estates and the funerary monuments which had been erected there.

We have no funerary inscriptions for the Traianenses, but the two we have for the Tungri are both in the countryside, as is the only inscription of the Nervii that may have been funerary in nature. Two of these three texts are only known through manuscripts, with a consequent loss of information. In the late 18th century, an inscription for a *duumvir* of the Nervii was seen at Saint-Hilaire-sur-Helpe next to the Roman road leading from Reims to the *civitas* capital of Bavay, which lies about 20 km further to the north. The inscription was set within a *tabula ansata* and erected by a *libertus*. It is not entirely clear from the text whether this is a funerary or an honorary inscription, and since there is no additional information on the type of material that supported the inscription (stone, bronze?) or on its dimensions, the interpretation as a funerary monument has to remain speculative.⁶³ Noteworthy is the location on the road. The other inscription that has come down to us via a manuscript concerns a tombstone by an *aedilis* of the *civitas Tungrorum* erected for himself and a former slave; the inscription was seen in Gors-Opleeuw, less than 10 km northwest of Tongres on the northern limit of the area with a dense distribution of villas and tumuli. The third and only surviving funerary inscription was erected by Vitorius Florentinus in commemoration of his father, the Tungrian *decurio* Vitorius Caupius. Its findspot at Cherain in the southeast of the *civitas Tungrorum* (cf. fig. 3) has sometimes been taken as proof that he was a councillor of a *pagus* in this part of the *civitas*,⁶⁴ but a far simpler explanation is that it indicates the location of his main rural property where his funerary monument was built.

As already mentioned, the evidence is sparse and the picture is partly determined by chance, but the significant regional differences that we still observe are remarkable. The relatively high number of funerary inscriptions from the Roman town of Cologne is surprising as they point in a different direction to what comparable investigations into the epigraphy of magistrates and councillors of communities in Gallia Narbonensis and Gallia Cisalpina have shown⁶⁵ (and what the few inscriptions from the other

⁶¹ Cf. Ausonius and his *villula*.

⁶² Bodel 1997.

⁶³ Similar methodological remarks are made by Février 1981, 360. In the immediate vicinity of the findspot, however, Roman cremation pits and a small fragment

of a marble funerary stone have been found. Cf. *Carte Archéologique de la Gaule* 59, pp. 383 f.

⁶⁴ Cf. *ILB* 60 with the corrigenda in *ILB*² 60.

⁶⁵ Février 1981.

civitates suggest). With one exception, onomastic data of the known members of the colony's municipal elite point to them having local roots. This means that the different picture cannot be explained away by ascribing most of these funerary monuments to 'foreigners' who had only one real choice – buying a burial plot in one of the urban cemeteries. The only explanation I can offer is that this apparent preference among the colony's municipal elite is a sign of the town's success. Only future finds may help us to see whether Cologne really is an exception in this respect.

If the small sample allows us to say anything further, it seems that the decurial elite of the Tungri and Nervii were more inclined to opt for burial in the countryside. For the Tungri such a preference may be confirmed by the archaeological evidence. Vanderhoeven observed that 'there are no elite graves in the cemeteries at Tongres, although we did find their houses in the town.'⁶⁶ Instead, from the late 1st century onwards, there are many monumental tumuli in the countryside around Tongres, which were clearly associated with a rich elite; the inscription of the Tungrian *decurio* at Cherain was found at precisely such a tumulus. A similar argument may perhaps be made for the Nervii, although the empirical basis for cemeteries is much smaller there and caution is therefore needed. However, a recent study of a cemetery along the arterial road leading out of Bagacum to the east concluded that rich burials of the municipal elite are still unknown.⁶⁷

5 BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP AND PATRONAGE

Having evaluated the funerary inscriptions, we now focus on the votive inscriptions and a small set of dedications or honorary inscriptions. We will use this evidence, in particular that of the honorary inscriptions, to discuss another type of relationship that tied the municipal elite to the countryside – namely, bonds of friendship and patronage.

Regarding the religious domain, our survey has resulted in seven votive inscriptions and one building inscription made by members of the municipal elite of the Agrippinenses and two votive inscriptions by those of the Traianenses; there are no such inscriptions for the Tungri and Nervii. The findspots and the gods involved allow us to draw conclusions about the precise ways in which magistrates or councillors were involved in religious matters within their community.

A building inscription by an *aedilis* from Cologne (Appendix 1, no. 7) testifies to his duty as officeholder to monitor the building of publicly financed projects, in this case a temple for Apollo in the colony's urban centre. Direct involvement by a member of the ruling elite in the upkeep of the religious infrastructure is evident in a votive inscription on a small column from Xanten. We are informed that a *decurio* paid for the restoration of a monument for Jupiter the Best and Greatest. The column, three feet in height, may have served as a support for a statue; whether the *restitutio* just concerned the statue and/or its base or also involved work on a temple has to remain unresolved. In addition to these interventions in the urban centres of both colonies, magistrates and councillors were often also involved in financing public buildings in the countryside. An example is provided by the votive inscription from Heerlen by a *decurio* from CVT who financed the repairs of the public baths in the *vicus* of Coriovallum. Further, the four dedications by a former *duumvir*, a *quaestor* and two *decurions* of CCAA in the sanctuary of the Aufaniae at Bonn underline the fact that the cult of the Aufaniae, and in particular the one near the legionary base at Bonn, featured among the public cults of the Agrippinenses.⁶⁸ In all these cases, the sanctuaries and cults involved took advantage of support from local authorities. Finally, three inscriptions may tell us more about the ruling elite's personal attachments to particular cults. In the case of the

⁶⁶ Vanderhoeven 1996, 222 f.

⁶⁷ Loridant/Deru 2009, 119 f.

⁶⁸ Derks 1998, 119 ff, esp. 130; Scheid 1999, 402 ff, esp. 411 and 414.

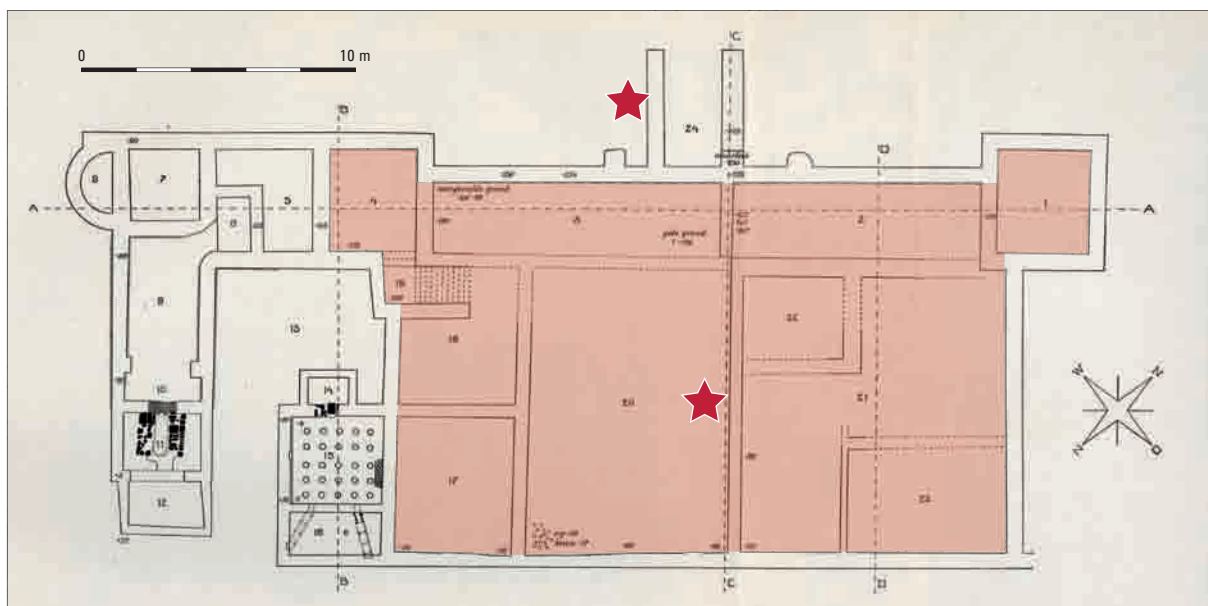


Fig. 4. Simplified plan of the villa of Valkenburg–Ravensbos. Shaded area: probable layout of the original plan in the villa’s first phase; a bath suite and a room with hypocaust were added at a later stage. The symbols mark the approximate findspots of the inscriptions (after Remouchamps 1925, fig. 41).

votive altar to Liber Pater and Hercules by the Agrippinensian *decurio* M. Vannius Adiutor, it is uncertain – given the urban context of the dedication – whether the altar was set up in his capacity as *decurio* or as a private dedication. Two votive inscriptions from Blankenheim and Gereonsweiler dedicated to the local goddesses Titaca and the matronae Berhviahenae tell a clearer story. The fact that members of the municipal aristocracy turned to these otherwise barely known goddesses⁶⁹ may be an indication that they came from the immediate vicinity and were familiar with these cults of old. They probably owned an estate close to the sanctuary.

The sample of votive inscriptions discussed above illustrates the connections in the religious domain between the ruling elite and the countryside over which they ruled. Whereas in some cases the inscriptions reveal the obligations that went with holding an office, others – especially those to highly local deities – may reveal a personal attachment of the dedicating magistrate or *decurio* to the cult in question and may point to properties of the municipal elite in the vicinity.

To conclude our survey, we will turn our attention to the four remaining texts inscribed on three small bronze tablets which were found during excavations in the villa of Ravensbos near Valkenburg on the presumed southwestern boundary between CVT and the *civitas Tungrorum* (cf. fig. 3).⁷⁰ As may be deduced from the plan published in the excavation report (fig. 4), the villa was originally laid out as a simple building of the corridor type with risaliths to which, in secondary instance, a wing with baths was added on the short south west side and a room with a hypocaust on the long south side. Even after these enlargements the villa was still of modest dimensions. As far as the tablets are concerned, two (tablets 1 and 2) were found in the villa’s main hall (room 20) and the third (tablet 3) close to the steps leading to

⁶⁹ Ti[ta]ca may also be mentioned in an inscription from Koblenz: *CIL* XIII 7624.

⁷⁰ The river Geul is now generally accepted as the natural boundary between the Colonia Ulpia Traiana and the Municipium Tungrorum. Cf. Raepsaet-Charlier 1994,

45 (map), 56 (using the inscriptions); Brulet 2008, 53 and fig. 62 (map) (without argument). Cf. however, Bridger 2008, 607 and Abb. 426 (map), who assumes that the territory of the CVT extended as far south as Maastricht (without argument).



Fig. 5. Bronze tablet from the Roman villa of Valkenburg-Ravensbos (tablet 1). Front with inscription mentioning M. Vitalinius, *decurio* and *duumvir quinquennalis* of the Colonia Ulpia Traiana. The token of honour was offered by a certain Iulius (Photo author).

the portico at the front of the building. On the basis of their findspot and content, I assume that each of these inscriptions was once on display in the villa's portico or central reception hall.⁷¹

The four texts belong to the rather rare category of inscriptions that document a patron-client relationship.⁷² In this respect, they are closely related to the *tabulae patronatus*, the bronze tablets with municipal decrees proclaiming the initiation of a patron-client relationship between the civic community and an individual.⁷³ But unlike those tablets, the patron-client relationships embodied by our texts lack

⁷¹ After the *editio princeps* (Remouchamps 1925, 59–64), the inscriptions have never been re-examined. Given their importance, it has been decided to present a basic description and a renewed reading, based on autopsy, in the appendices to this paper.

⁷² Cf. Remouchamps 1925, 62, with note 2; Bogaers 1981, 55; Slofstra 1983, 93 f. (with many errors in the transcrip-

tion). Another singular piece of evidence pointing to informal patronage at the lowest levels of society may be found in the inscription of a floor mosaic in the entrance hall of the villa of Laufenburg: *Germania* 24, 1940, 35; Rothkegel 1994, 42–44, Abb. 31; Nesselhauf/Lieb 1959, no. 94 = *AE* 1998, 987.

⁷³ Nicols 1980.



Fig. 6. Bronze tablet from the Roman villa of Valkenburg-Ravensbos (tablet 1). Back with inscription mentioning T. Tertinius [Cornutus?], *decurio*, former *aedilis*, and present *duumvir quinquennalis* (?) of the Colonia Ulpia Traiana. Dedicated by the Pagus Catual[ensis?] to its best patron (Photo author).

a high political profile and so the size and shape of the tablets, as well as the style of the texts, have been adapted accordingly. Whereas one of the client parties is a community, this is a *pagus* instead of the entire city; the other three clients are private individuals. If the initiation of the relationship with the *pagus* presupposes some sort of official collective decision, the latter three concern personal and informal bonds of patronage between individuals.

The first of the three tablets bears an inscription on both sides. The best preserved and oldest text is on what may therefore be called the front (fig. 5) and refers to a gift from a certain Iulius⁷⁴ to his ‘best friend’, by the name of Marcus Vitalinius (the man’s cognomen is missing). Vitalinius was a *decurio* and

⁷⁴ Iulius is used here as single name. See the commentary in Appendix 5.

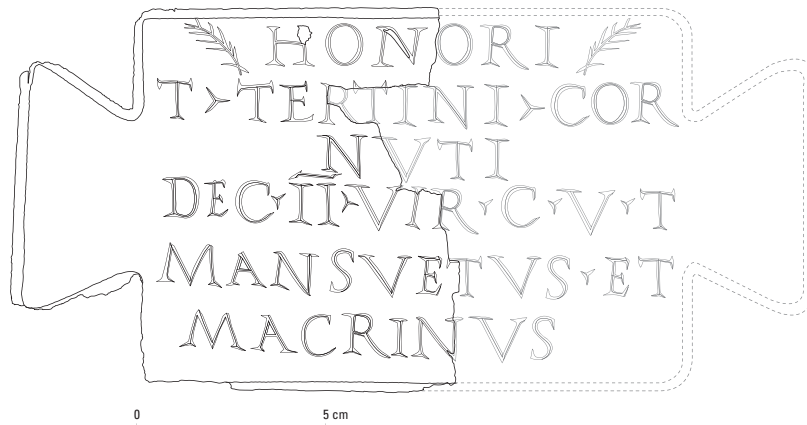


Fig. 7. Bronze tablet from the Roman villa of Valkenburg-Ravensbos (tablet 2). Dedicated by two *peregrini* in honour of T. Tertinius Cornutus?, *decurio* and *duumvir* of the Colonia Ulpia Traiana (Photo Municipality of Maastricht).

former *quaestor* of the Colonia Ulpia Traiana and received the honour of the gift while acting as *duumvir* with censorial power. We learn nothing about Iulius, but his single name suggests that he was a peregrine. Although the bond between the two men was couched in the language of equality as expressed by the stereotypic address to a ‘best friend’ (*amicus optimus*), the difference in their personal legal status suggests that in reality their relationship must have been hierarchical, with Iulius the subservient client of his socially superior friend and patron.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ *Amici* is just as likely to refer to vertical and horizontal relationships of friendship, and thus may denote either social equality or inequality. Cf. Caldelli 2001; Panciera 2001, 15, with examples of unequal relations between *amici*. Of course, relations between people of unequal

status need not necessarily be devoid of the human emotions of true friendship. Cf. the useful review by D. Konstan (<http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2002/2002-04-29.html>) and now Verboven 2011.



Fig. 8. Bronze tablet from the Roman villa of Valkenburg-Ravensbos (tablet 3). The inscription probably honoured the same T. Tertinius Cornutus?, who is mentioned in tablets 1 and 2. The tablet was offered by a private individual as a token of personal friendship (Photo Municipality of Maastricht).

The other three inscriptions all refer to one and the same man, a certain T. Tertinius (again the cognomen is largely missing, but can perhaps be restored as Cornutus).⁷⁶ Like M. Vitalinius, T. Tertinius was a *decurio* of the Colonia Ulpia Traiana; his municipal career had in any event brought him to the offices of *aedilis* and *duumvir*. The first of the three texts dedicated to him consists of a punched inscription on the back of the tablet we just have been discussing (fig. 6). Since the letters of this inscription have left their mark on the other side, thereby robbing it of some of its original splendour, this text must have been the younger one, made after the inscription for M. Vitalinius on the front had lost its significance.⁷⁷ Tertinius figures here as patron of the *pagus Catual[ensis?]*.

⁷⁶ See Appendix 5.

⁷⁷ Finke 1927, (306a): 'Daß die Inschrift der Rückseite jün-

ger ist, geht daraus hervor, daß die eingepunzten Punkte auf der Vorderseite erhaben hervortreten.'

The second tablet from the Ravensbos bearing the second inscription for Tertinius concerns an explicit token of honour (fig. 7). The name or names of the donor(s) are not completely preserved and reconstruction of the text has to remain conjectural. Most commentators have read two single names – Mansuetus and Macrinus. Unless we suppose that their gentilicia have gone unmentioned and the single names functioned as cognomina, both men must have been *peregrini* without citizenship. This suggests that here too we might be dealing with a relationship of social inequality. That proposition is confirmed by the use of the word HONORI in the opening line of the inscription, which denotes a position of inferiority on the part of the dedicator. Even if the text is not explicit on this point, a patron-client relationship seems very plausible.⁷⁸

Finally, the third text on the third tablet is too fragmentary to add anything new (fig. 8). We may be happy to establish that the recipient of the tablet was in all probability the same T. Tertinius, as seems to be suggested by the beginning of the first line which mentions the name of the dedicatee. We cannot determine which aspects of his municipal career were mentioned. The donor's name, Flor[---], has a greater chance of being restored as the nomen Florentius followed by a cognomen.

What can we infer from these texts beyond the simple fact that they point to the presence of two councillors in a villa in the extreme southwest of the colony's territory? Let me state first that M. Vitalinius and T. Tertinius are likely to have been successive proprietors of the villa. We cannot tell what the relationship between the two patrons was and how the property was transmitted from Vitalinius to Tertinius – by sale, exchange or marriage, or by splitting, bequest or inheritance.⁷⁹ An issue that has elicited frequent comment is the distance between the findspot of the tablets in a villa some 100 km away from the political centre at Xanten, where Vitalinius and Tertinius held office (cf. fig. 3).⁸⁰ The underlying assumptions are apparently that the addressees of the inscriptions had received the tokens of honour in the town, that their residence in the Ravensbos was simply too far away to be visited while they held office and that the property could therefore only have been acquired after completion of their term of office – in other words, the tablets had only arrived at the Ravensbos in secondary instance as a result of the addressees moving house. While it seems logical that the tablets were offered when the magistrates were still at their post,⁸¹ we needn't assume that the sole place where this could happen was their urban *domus*. It is much more plausible that receptions and audiences took place in both the rural residences of the ruling elite and their town houses.⁸² The tablets then testify to the reception of clients in the villa of the Ravensbos itself. Chance has it that the reverse is also visible from another text in our collection, the bronze tabula ansata from Bavay, which the Nervian *duumvir* Tib. Iulius Tiberinus received from his *lictor* Q. Titius Vilicus. Although the text is less explicit than that of our tablets (it only has the name of the addressee in the dative and the name of the donor in the nominative with the added appositive *lictor*), I can hardly see a better explanation than to view this as a token of friendship between two men who had come to know each other very well through their daily, routine contacts in the administration of the Nervian capital in their respective positions as supreme office-holder and *lictor*.⁸³ We have no information

⁷⁸ Cf. also a bronze tablet from Verona (CIL V 3401), dedicated in honour of (*honori*) a local magistrate by the *apparitores et limocincti tribunalis eius*, i.e. by the civic servants that had to assist the magistrate with the execution of his office. On these public servants, Weiß 2004; David 2008.

⁷⁹ Even if their gentilicia differ, a family relationship between the two men and thus inheritance as the form of transmission cannot be completely ruled out given the frequent use in the area of patronymic nomina con-

structed after the cognomen of the father. If M. Vitalinius' cognomen is restored as Tertius, theoretically T. Tertinius might thus have been his son!

⁸⁰ Cf. Remouchamps 1925, 65; Finke 1927, no. 306; Rupprecht 1975, 207.

⁸¹ *Contra* Rupprecht 1975, 207.

⁸² Cf. also Roymans/Derks, this volume, Section 6.

⁸³ Cf., for a similar case, see the collective dedication from Verona cited in note 78.

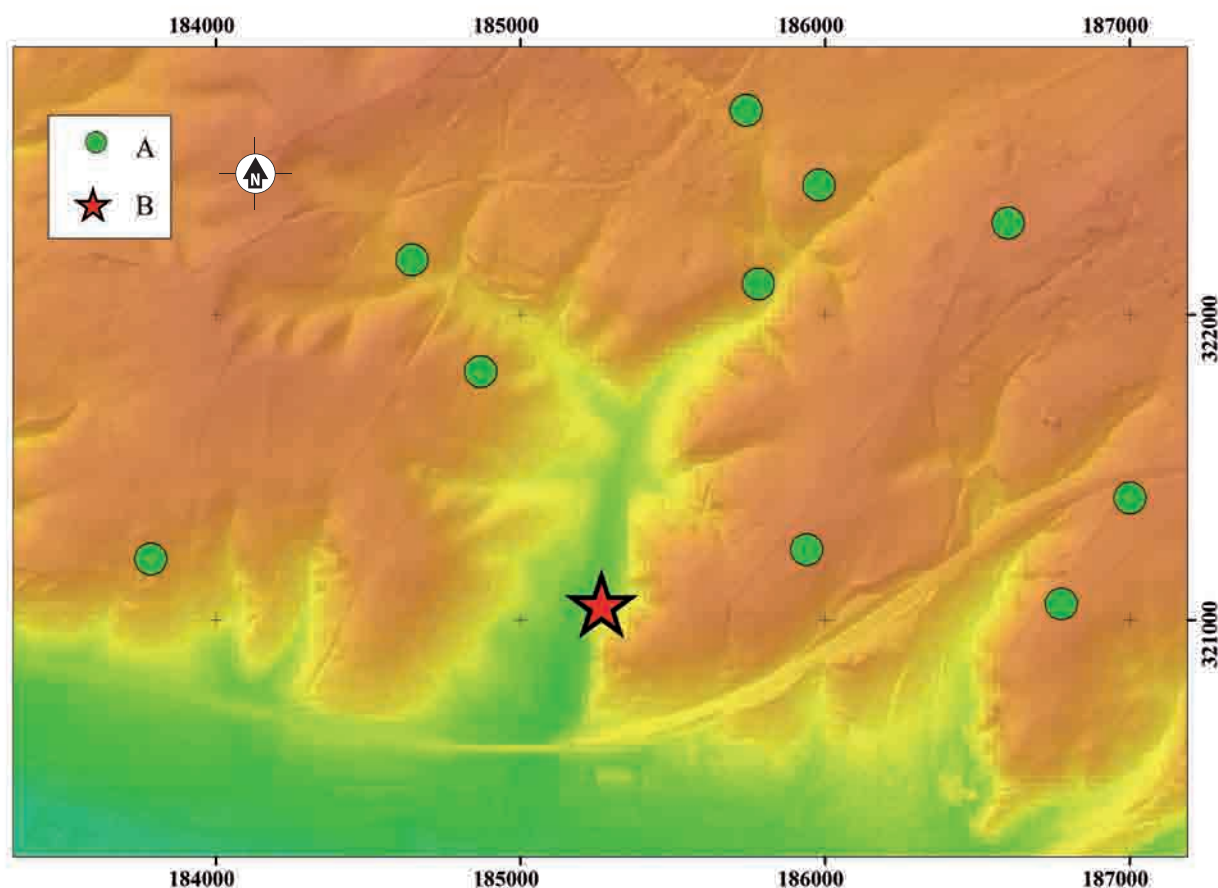


Fig. 9. Distribution of Roman villas (symbol A) in the area just north of present-day Valkenburg in the Netherlands. Striking is the location of the villa of Valkenburg-Ravensbos (symbol B) close to the valley bottom of a tributary of the river Geul, the east-west oriented valley of which is just visible at the bottom of the map. Data and map courtesy of K. Jeneson.

as to the precise findspot of the tablet, but a very attractive suggestion is that it stems from the urban *domus* of the *duumvir*, which would make it a nice counterpiece to the tablets from the Ravensbos.

We may conclude from this that three of our texts were offered by private individuals from the area around the villa and were presented at receptions during one of the temporary stays of the office-holder in the Ravensbos. While in those instances both parties may have been satisfied to display the token of gratitude that declared their mutual friendship in the private context of the villa's portico or reception hall, it is difficult to see that this worked in the same way for the *pagus* too. If the *pagus* Catual[ensis?] wanted to honour T. Tertinius as its benefactor, we would normally expect the honour to have been bestowed not during a closed meeting in the patron's private villa, but rather in one of the imposing spaces the *pagus* had at its disposal. How then do we explain this find in the hall of the villa? It is my guess that the decree of the *pagus* posited the production of two texts, firstly a comprehensive one destined for public display at a much-frequented spot (*locus celeberrimus*), either in the urban centre of the colony or in a *vicus* in the territory of the *pagus*, and secondly, an abbreviated copy which often just mentioned the cooptation into the *ordo*, handed out to the patron for display in his private villa. In cases of official appointments of civic *patroni* this at least was standard practice.⁸⁴ A delegation appointed by and often

⁸⁴ Nicols 1980; Panciera 2001. For Gaul, cf. *CIL* XIII 921, concerning three *tabulae patronatus* from the late 4th century offered by the *civitas Senonum*, *civitas Autissiodu-*

rensium and the *Aureliani*, to the provincial governor of Maxima Senonia. The bronze tablets were found in his villa near Agen in Aquitania (Juliot 1898, 30–35).

elected from the *ordo decurionum* went to visit the intended patron with the request to receive the city in his client network (*accipere in clientelam suam*) and to accept a copy of the municipal decree as testimony of his patronship to be put on display in his home.⁸⁵ If we accept this model, the *pagus Catual[ensis?]* must have sent envoys to the villa of its intended patron in the Ravensbos. Although we do not know where exactly the *pagus* was situated, an attractive assumption is that the villa was within, or not too far beyond, its boundaries.⁸⁶ The *pagus* would then have had good reason to visit Tertinius in his rural property rather than his urban *domus*. And since men of standing and fortune such as Tertinius will constantly have been sought for support and help, emotional ties with the petitioning community might have been decisive in a patron's decision to accept or decline the request; ancestral roots may then have played an important role.

Finally, with the knowledge of town-country dynamics gathered so far, the function of the villa of the Ravensbos may be re-assessed. If we assume that the villa was just one of several houses belonging to its owner, it is debatable that this was also his main residence. First, given the high density of villas in the immediate vicinity (fig. 9), the villa's estate cannot have been very sizeable. This observation brought Tessa de Groot to the hypothesis that this and other neighbouring villas 'applied themselves, alongside farming, to the exploitation of gravel pits and limestone quarries, as a result of which a large acreage of farmland was of less importance'.⁸⁷ I am not convinced that these secondary activities were carried out on such a scale that they made a significant contribution to the income of this and other villas in the vicinity. Gravel extraction and quarrying, in my opinion, never went beyond the needs of the own farm and never became a real trade. But the whole hypothesis becomes superfluous if we abandon the idea – widespread among archaeologists – that villa estates were composed of continuous blocks of farmland with the villa neatly nestled at its centre. Through sales and purchases, inheritances, bequests and divisions, villa estates may have varied markedly in size. Villa landscapes may have been much more fragmented and dynamic than archaeologists tend to suppose and in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, scattered properties may have been the rule rather than the exception.⁸⁸ Second, the villa of the Ravensbos is situated almost on the valley bottom of a small stream, a tributary of the river Geul (fig. 9). This is an unusual location for a Roman villa, not one that we would expect if agrarian exploitation was its main goal.⁸⁹ If the estate had no other farmland at some distance from the villa (something we cannot of course know), we could entertain the possibility that the primary importance of the property for its proprietor resided not so much in its economic revenues (which were certainly welcome), but rather in its function as a pleasant and comfortable residence in the countryside.

To conclude this section, I want to briefly present another villa in the territory of the Traianenses. In contrast to the one from the Ravensbos, the villa of Maasbracht has an excellent pedigree for having been the main residence of its office-holding owner.

⁸⁵ Cf. CIL VI 1492: ... *tabula / hospitali incisa hoc decreto in domo / sua posita permittat* ...

⁸⁶ On the basis of the place name Catualium documented on the Tabula Peutingeriana as one of the stations on the road between Aduatuca Tungrorum and Noviomagus, the *pagus* must at least partly be situated on the left bank of the Meuse. The question is whether it stretched beyond the river, and if so, how far. On the basis of the inscriptions from the Ravensbos, the river Geul is generally accepted as the southern boundary of the colony's territory (Bogaers 1972, 310; Raepsaet-Charlier 1994, 45 (map)). If this is right, the *pagus'* extreme limit in south-eastern direction can not have been beyond that river.

⁸⁷ De Groot 2005, 18: '...zich naast de landbouw ook toelegden op de exploitatie van grindkuilen en kalksteengroeven, waardoor een groot akkerbouwareaal minder van belang was.'

⁸⁸ However, the different properties need not to be as far apart as the examples from the literary sources suggest. Cf., for example, Ausonius' properties: urban house in Bordeaux, a villa near Bordeaux, a villa near Cognac (= *fundus Lucanus* or *Lucaniacus*) an estate at Bazas, land at Rom near Poitiers and at Buch near Sauveterre-de-Guyenne. Aubert 1994, 142, note 80.

⁸⁹ An archaeological indication is the presence of just one secondary building, measuring 16x8 m. Cf. Remouchamps 1925, fig. 40.

As is well-known, public service was not without its obligations. All magistrates and decurions were expected to take on certain *munera*, ranging from financing the construction or repair of a public building to the organisation of games at one of the many religious festivals. The proper fulfilment of such duties could subsequently be exploited for private prestige and status by being depicted in carefully selected floor mosaics or wall paintings in the magistrate's private house. The excavations of the villa of Maasbracht in the early 1980s produced a very nice example of this.⁹⁰

In the villa's cellar, a late 2nd-century addition to the building, a large quantity of painted plaster fragments were found which must have originated from the villa's main room situated just above. Like most wall decorations from villas in the area, the fragments could be shown to have belonged to a system of panel decoration which divided the wall into three horizontal zones. One of the black rectangular panels of the central zone had a nearly life-size figure of a *bestiarius* identifiable by the typical puttees wrapped around his lower leg and a heavily clothed upper arm. It has been suggested that what is represented here is the proprietor's *munus* of gladiatorial games which he most likely organised in the amphitheatre of the colony at Xanten.⁹¹ Depicted in the upper register of the wall are two standing men in Gallic costume fashioned like Roman dress, one with a purse in his right hand, a reference to the family's wealth, and a seated figure recording notes or accounts on what looks like a wooden tablet. If the latter scene can be taken as a direct reference to the villa-owner's bookkeeping, following the legal definition of what constitutes a *domus* ('wherever one had his seat and bookkeeping and the organisation of his property'),⁹² this may provide an additional argument for the proposition that this villa was the proprietor's main residence.

To conclude, if we compare the two villas of Ravensbos and Maasbracht, they are not dissimilar: both may be identified as properties belonging to members of the ruling elite, albeit on the basis of different source material. Both show how the political elite of the town had close ties with segments of the population in the countryside, perhaps most intensely with those in their own district. Both examples also demonstrate that the villas of the municipal elite of the Traianenses, which hardly qualify for the category of medium-sized villas, cannot stand comparison with those known in other regions of Gaul. We do not know the urban *domus* these magistrates had in Xanten, but if the investments for it had to be earned through arable farming, perhaps we needn't be surprised that the present knowledge of the colony's town houses has not yet revealed the same luxury and wealth seen in other *civitas* capitals in Gaul.

6 CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, I hope to have demonstrated that epigraphic research can make a valuable contribution to the social interpretation of villa landscapes. While these sources certainly have their own problems, they also allow us to nuance some of the straightforward archaeological interpretations that have sometimes been presented in the past. I want to conclude by briefly summarising the conclusions that we reached, however banal they may at times seem.

- 1) For the ruling elite, the foundation of towns and the introduction of a new form of self-governance meant that they settled in the new towns.
- 2) There was flexibility regarding the property criteria for entry to the council and as a consequence regarding council size. There was also room for accommodating local traditions concerning the size of the council.

⁹⁰ Unfortunately, the excavation has so far not been published. For preliminary reports, Willems 1982; Van Dierendonck/Swinkels/Willems 1987.

⁹¹ Swinkels 1987.

⁹² Dig. 50.16.203: *ubi quisque sedes et tabulas haberet suarumque rerum constitutionem fecisset.*

- 3) The administrative elite's possessions in the countryside could include several estates and one or more houses (Ravensbosch); the largest investments will have been made in the main residence, either in the town or the country (Maasbracht).
- 4) It is conceivable that in poorer regions, such as the *civitates* of the Cananefates, the Batavians and to a certain degree also that of the Traianenses, some town councillors did not own a home in the country but made do with a house in town.
- 5) The use of the umbrella term 'ruling elite' suggests that the magistrates and councillors who made up this body of politically engaged aristocracy were a closed homogeneous group. We may speak of a community of peers who shared common values, ideals and social practices.⁹³ We have also hinted at differences in terms of hierarchy, seniority, political influence, wealth and status.
- 6) Most *decuriones* probably arranged to be buried on an estate in the country and not in town. For the Agrippinenses, however, the available material suggests the reverse.
- 7) Councillors and magistrates were a unifying link between town and country. Fortunes earned in the countryside were invested in town via *munera* such as funding the construction or maintenance of public buildings or games and by building private town houses.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i>
<i>BRGK</i>	<i>Berichte der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Codex Justiniani</i>
<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digesta</i>
<i>IKöln</i> ²	Galsterer, B. and H. 2010: <i>Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln</i> , Mainz (Kölner Forschungen 10).
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Pauly-Wissowa's Realencyclopädie</i>

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⁹³ Cf. Crowley, this volume.

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APPENDIX 1. INSCRIPTIONS MENTIONING MEMBERS OF THE RULING ELITE OF THE AGRIPPINENSES (BOLD: FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS; ITALICISED: VOTIVE INSCRIPTIONS).

	findspot	name	office	date	reference
1	Cologne	[--- V]ot(uria tribu) [---]	Ilvir		<i>IKöln</i> ² 286
2	Cologne	-	aedilicius		<i>IKöln</i> ² 287
3	Cologne	Constantianus	decurio CC[AA]		<i>CIL</i> XIII 8333 = <i>IKöln</i> ² 288
4	Cologne	-	decurio CCAA		<i>IKöln</i> ² 289
5	Cologne? (Spellen)	Veranius Victorinus	decurio c(oloniae) Ag(rippinensis)		<i>CIL</i> XIII 8602 = <i>IKöln</i> ² 290
6	Cologne	Deccius Fruendus	decurio CCAA		<i>IKöln</i> ² 291
7	Cologne	C. Iul(ius) [---]	[Ilvir i]ter(um) aedil(icia) p(otestate)		<i>CIL</i> XIII 8165 = <i>IKöln</i> ² 6
8	Cologne	M. Vannius Adiutor	decurio		<i>IKöln</i> ² 50
9	Bonn	Tib. Claudius [I]ustus	Ilviralis		N 162
10	Bonn	C. Candidinius Verus	decurio CCAA		N 163
11	Bonn	T. Macrinus Titianus	decurio CCAA	235	N 164
12	Bonn	Q. Vettius Severus	quaestor CCAA	164	N 165
13	Nettersheim	-	decurio CCAA		<i>CIL</i> XIII 7827 = <i>CSIR</i> Deutschl. III.2, no. 50
14	Zülpich-Hoven	Masclinius Maternus	decurio CA aedilicius duumviralis	352	<i>CIL</i> XIII 7918
15	Blankenheim	Q. Vinus Ursule[---]	decurio CoCAA		<i>CIL</i> XIII 8853
16	Gereonsweiler	Q. Acilius Verus	decurio CCAA		<i>CIL</i> XIII 12013

APPENDIX 2. INSCRIPTIONS MENTIONING MEMBERS OF THE RULING ELITE OF THE TRAIANENSES (ITALICISED: VOTIVE INSCRIPTIONS).

	findspot	name	office	reference
1	Xanten	M. R(---) R(---)	decurio CVT	<i>CIL</i> XIII 8617
2	Heerlen	M. Sattonius Iu[cun]dus	decurio CVT	N-L 247
3	Ravensbos	M. Vitalinius [---]	decurio CVT quaestoricius Ilvir quinq.	F 306
4	Ravensbos	T. Tertinius [Cor]nu[tus?]	aedilicius [Ilvir quinq.?] CVT	F 306
5	Ravensbos	T. Tertinius [Cor]nu[tus?]	decurio Ilvir [CVT]	F 307
6	Ravensbos	T. Tertinius [Cor]nu[tus?]	decurio [aedilicius CVT?] Ilvir [quinq.?]	F 308

APPENDIX 3 : INSCRIPTIONS MENTIONING MEMBERS OF THE RULING ELITE OF THE TUNGRI (BOLD: FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS).

	findspot	name	office	reference
1	Vaux-les-Cherain	Victorius Caupius	decurio	<i>AE</i> 1921, 66 = <i>ILB</i> ² 60
2	Gors-Opleeuw	C. Gracileius Similis	aedilis	<i>CIL</i> XIII 3599 = <i>ILB</i> ² 21

APPENDIX 4. INSCRIPTIONS MENTIONING MEMBERS OF THE RULING ELITE OF THE NERVII (BOLD: FUNERARY INSCRIPTION).

	findspot	name	office	reference
1	Bavay	Tib. Iul(ius) Tiberinus	Ilvir	<i>CIL</i> XIII 3572
2	Saint-Hilaire-sur-Helpe- 'Fuchau'	C. Serenius Quartus	Ilvir	<i>AE</i> 1997, 1141

APPENDIX 5. DESCRIPTION AND COMMENTARY ON THE
THREE TABLETS FROM THE VILLA OF THE RAVENBOS.⁹⁴

TABLET 1

Depository: Larger part in permanent exhibition at the
Römermuseum Xanten (long term loan from RMO, Lei-
den), two smaller fragments in RMO Leiden

Findspot: Valkenburg-Ravensbos,
villa, near east wall of room 20

Inv.no. RMO, Leiden: l 1932/12.1a (larger part); l
1932/12.1b (two small fragments)

Bronze tablet which seems to have had the form of a tabula ansata with inscription on both sides. For the text on the other side to be readable, the tablet has to be turned around its horizontal axis. One of the smaller fragments, which bears traces of the letter M, has to be placed at the top left (seen from the front). The other small fragment is plain on both sides and, since it does not fit to the other fragments, its place within the tablet cannot be determined; it has therefore not been included in the photographs and drawings of figs. 5 and 6. At the end of line 4 on the back, one letter has crumbled off since the tablet's discovery (compare photos in Van Es 1981, fig. 180 with those in this contribution). Right half is missing; on the long sides as well as on the bottom left and on the top left (i.e. on one of the two small fragments) the original rim has been preserved, whereas it is missing in between, where the ansa may be expected. The tablet's largest width is at present 12.9 cm, the full height 11.7 cm. The text on the front has been engraved, the other on the back punched; punch marks are visible on the front. Letter height on the front: 10-11 mm; on the back, first line 10-11 mm, third line 10 mm, fourth line 9-11 mm (but first letter P 16 mm), fifth line 7 mm. A plaster cast of the tablet is kept in the depository of the Centre Céramique at Maastricht under inv. no. BC679.

Selective literature: Remouchamps 1925, 59-62 with fig. 54-55; *AE* 1926, 128-129; Finke 1927, 306; Byvanck, A.W., 1935: *Excerpta Romana. De bronnen der Romeinsche geschiedenis van Nederland* vol. II, 's-Gravenhage, 83, no. 33; Rupprecht 1975, 207-208; Van Es, W.A., 1981: *De Romeinen in Nederland*, Haarlem, 236 with fig. 180; Bloemers, J.H.F./L.P. Louwe Kooijmans/H. Sarfatij (eds), 1981: *Verleden land. Archeologische opgravingen in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 92-93 (with fig.); Bogaers 1981, 55; Bechert, T., 1982: *Römisches Germanien zwischen Rhein und Maas. Die Provinz Germania inferior*, München, 48, with fig. 42-43 and 119; Bechert, T., 1983: *De Romeinen tussen Maas en Rijn*, Dieren, 47-48, with fig. 42-43 and 119; Slofstra 1983, 93, no. 2 and 1; Galsterer 1999, 268-269; Brulet 2008, 53; Eck 2008, 251; Bridger 2008, 608, with note 2442.

Front:

M · VITALINI
DEC · C · V · T · Q
CIO · IIVIR · Q
IVLIVS · AMIC

*M(arco) Vitalinio [---] / dec(urioni) C(oloniae) V(lpiae)
T(raianae) q[uaestori]/cio / (duum)vir(o) q[ui]ng(ennali)] / Iulius
amic[o optimo]*

Back :

· T · TERTINIO
AEDILICIO
· C · V
PAGVS · CATVAL
NO

*T(ito) Tertinio [Cornuto?] / aedilicio [(duum)vir(o)?
quinq(uenali)?] / C(oloniae) V(lpiae) [T(raianae) / Pagus
Catual[ensis? patro] / no [optimo]*

⁹⁴ I like to thank Ruurd Halbertsma (National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden), Marcus Reuter and Christine Lincke (Römermuseum Xanten) and Wim Dijkman (municipality of Maastricht) for giving me the opportunity to study the objects in their keeping and for assis-

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Front: 'To Marcus Vitalinius [---], councillor of Colonia Ulpia Traiana, former quaestor, (and present) duumvir quinquennalis. Iulius for his best friend.'

Back: 'To Titus Tertinius [Cornutus?], former aedile, [active duumvir quinquennalis?] of Colonia Ulpia Traiana. The pagus Catual[ensis?] to its best patron.'

COMMENTARY

Front

- 1 Vitalinius: patronymic nomen, derived from the cognomen Vitalis.
- 2 The only magistracy that can have been mentioned here is the quaestorship; together with the final line and line 4 of the back (see below), this determines the tablet's original width.
- 3 Given the available space, *quinquennalis* can not have been written in full. Most often it is abbreviated to *quinq*, less frequently occur *qq* and *quinquen*. Which of these options is to be preferred, depends on how the dedicator's name is reconstructed and on whether or not one is prepared to accept a small *vacat* at the end of the line.
- 4 Iulius: since this can not have been the nomen (for then the distinctive cognomen would be missing) it functioned either as a single name or as a cognomen. In comparison to Iulius as cognomen, which is rare (cf. *CIL* XIII 2091, 2112, 4163, 4372, *IKöln*² 488, and the parallels cited by Finke 1927, 306), Iulius as a single name is not uncommon (e.g. *CIL* XIII 278, 474, 914, 1115, 1236, 1841, 2175, 5646, 5785, 11384-5; *AE* 1978, 495, *IKöln*² 55, and Kajanto, I., 1982: *The Latin cognomina*, Helsinki, 61). Should one wish to read Iulius as a cognomen, the nomen must have been a familiar one that was abbreviated to two or three letters, e.g. Ulp(ius) or Aur(elius). More likely, however, is that the dedicator was a peregrine. In the latter case, we have to assume either the longer abbreviation *quinquen(alis)* or the shorter version with a small *vacat* at the end of line 3. *Amico optimo* seems to have been written in full.

It seems most unlikely that the tablet mentions the complete municipal career of M. Vitalinius, as has sometimes been suggested (cf. Bechert 1982, 48): Vitalinius had certainly been ordinary *duumvir* before he was finally elected *duumvir quinquennalis*.

Back

- 1 For the cognomen, see tablet 2.
- 2 After the aedileship another magistracy must have been mentioned. From tablets 2 and 3 we know for certain that Tertinius had been *duumvir*, most probably with censorial power. It therefore seems best to assume that this magistracy was mentioned in the second half of the line.
- 3 Given the large *vacat* at the beginning, this line can only have contained the colony's abbreviated name CVT.
- 4 The final letter is without doubt an L, as becomes clear from the photograph in Van Es 1981, 235, fig. 180; at present only the serif on the top has been preserved. For the name of the *pagus Catual[---]* several reconstructions have been suggested: *Catual[ium]* (Remouchamps 1925, 61), *Catual[inus?]* (Finke 306; Byvanck 1935, no. 33b; Bogaers 1981, 55; Brulet 2008, 53; Bridger 2008, 607), *Catual[iensis?]* (*AE* 1926, 129) and *Catual[ensis?]* (Eck 2008, 251). Most plausible seems a reconstruction with the suffix -ensis. The location of the *pagus* is relevant for the reconstruction of the boundary between the CVT and the *civitas Tungrorum*. Many have sought to establish a relation between the *pagus Catual[ensis?]* and Catualium, a road station on the Tongres-Nijmegen road mentioned on the Tabula Peutingeriana, and have therefore assumed that the *pagus* has to be located on the western bank of the river Meuse (cf. Raepsaet-Charlier 1994, 55 f.). If this seems right, the *pagus* may well have comprised some territory

to the east of the river as well. While the villa of Tertinius need not necessarily to have been situated within the territory of the *pagus* for him being able to function as its patron, the inscription does make this very likely. The *pagus*' most southern boundary may then have been constituted by the river Geul and have coincided with the southern boundary of the CVT. How the *pagus* got into the possession of the tablet, remains unclear: perhaps Tertinius himself offered the *pagus* the opportunity to reuse the tablet which he got in his possession when he bought the villa from Vitalinius or when he inherited it at his death.

TABLET 2

Depository: Centre Céramique, Maastricht
Inv.no.: BC680

Findspot: Valkenburg-Ravensbos, villa,
 near east wall of room 20

Bronze tabula ansata; right part missing. Since the first publication, a tiny fragment with the letters TI at the end of line 2 and V at the end of line 3, has been lost. Several letters have been engraved so deeply that they got cut through the tablet: this is the case with the letters O and N in line 1, N in line 3, C and V in line 4 and M and V in line 5. Deep engraving also explains why the tablet is often broken precisely on the stroke of a letter. Tablet's completely preserved height: 10 cm; greatest width, including ansa: 11.8 cm (width ansa c. 3.1 cm); greatest height ansa: c. 6.7 cm. Weight: 35.05 gr. Letter height is for all lines approximately 10 mm. A plaster cast of the tablet is kept in the depository of the Centre Céramique at Maastricht under Inv. no. I 1932/12.2.

Selective literature: Remouchamps 1925, 62–63 with fig. 57; *AE* 1926, 130; Finke 1927, 307; Byvanck, A.W., 1935: *Excerpta Romana. De bronnen der Romeinsche geschiedenis van Nederland* vol. II, 's-Gravenhage, 83, no. 34; Rupprecht 1975, 207; Slofstra 1983, 93, no. 3; De Grooth, M.E.Th., 1987: Villa rustica. Het boerenbedrijf in het Rijn/Maasgebied, in P. Stuart/M.E.Th. de Grooth (eds), *Langs de weg*, Heerlen/Maastricht, 81–86, here p. 83–84 with fig. 6; Galsterer 1999, 268–269; Bridger 2008, 608, with note 2442.

(palm) HONQ
 T · TERT
 NV
 DEC · II · VIR
 MANSVET
 MACRIN

(palm) Hono[ri (palm)] / T(iti) Tért[ini Cor]/nu[ti?] /
 dec(urionis) (duum)vir(i) [C(oloniae) V(lpiae) T(raiana)] /
 Mansuet[us et?] / Macrin[us]

TRANSLATION

'In honour of Titus Tért[inius Cor?]/nu[tus?], councillor, duumvir of Colonia Ulpia Traiana. Mansuet[us and?] Macrinus.'

COMMENTARY

- 2–3 Cornuti: given the width of the tablet, determined with some precision by the first and fourth line, there is room for three letters at the end of line 2. Against the common assumption, NU[---] in line 3 cannot have been the beginning of the cognomen, but is rather the central part of it. One could think of Ve/nulus, Luci/nulus, or Cor/nutus, the latter of which is the most frequent of the three.
- 4 If we assume that the name of the colony was mentioned somewhere in the text, this can only have been in this line. As a consequence, there seems no room left for the adjective *quinquennalis*, since even in its most abbreviated form, *q.q.*, it would not fit.

5-6 Most commentators have assumed two single names, although one could read as easily a nomen and cognomen, e.g. Mansuetinius Macrinus. Given the inferior position of the dedicators vis-à-vis the dedicatee as suggested by the opening formula *Honori*, it might be slightly more plausible to envisage two peregrine men as authors of the text than a single Roman citizen.

TABLET 3

Depository: Centre Céramique, Maastricht
Inv.no.: BC681

Findspot: Valkenburg-Ravensbos,
 villa, in front of the building near the
 stair leading to the portico

Bronze tabula ansata of which the greater part on the right is missing. Complete height 11.4 cm; greatest width, including ansa, 7.6 cm (width of ansa 3.8 cm); height of ansa at juncture with tablet c. 4.2 cm; the ansa is not exactly in the centre of the short side. The bronze is tinny. Weight of the fragment: 18.23 gr. A plaster cast of the tablet is kept in the depository of the Centre Céramique at Maastricht under Inv. no. I 1932/12.3.

Selective literature: Remouchamps 1925, 63-64 with fig. 58; *AE* 1926, 131; Finke 1927, 306; Byvanck, A.W., 1935: *Excerpta Romana. De bronnen der Romeinsche geschiedenis van Nederland* vol. II, 's-Gravenhage, 83, no. 35; Rupprecht 1975, 207; Slofstra 1983, 93, no. 4; Galsterer 1999, 268-269; Bridger 2008, 608, with note 2442.

TER[TINIO CORNVTO ?]
 DEC [AEDILIC ? CVT ? II]
 VIR [QVINQVENN?]
 FLOR
 AM[ICO OPTIMO]

*Tert[inio Cornuto?] / dec(urioni) [aedilic(io)? C(oloniae)
 V(lpiae) T(raianae) (duum)] / vir(o) [quinguenn(ali)?] /
 Flor[entius ---us? or Florentiniu ---us?] / am[ico optimo]*

TRANSLATION

'To Tertinius Cornutus?, councillor, [former aedile of Colonia Vlpia Traiana?, duum]vir [quinguennalis?]. Florentius ---us [or Florentinius ---us?] to his best friend'.

COMMENTARY

- 1 Assuming that the dedicatee is identical with the one in tablet 2, his nomen and cognomen can be restored accordingly.
- 2 At the end of the line, the duumvirate was mentioned, preceded by another magistracy, either the quaestorship or the aedileship; the latter is documented in tablet 1.
- 3 If Tertinius' career is listed in ascending order, the duumvirate was mentioned at the end of line 2 and the beginning of this line. Since the 'ordinary' duumvirate would leave us with a long *vacat*, this must have been the duumvirate with censorial power.
- 4 Given the available space, it seems most plausible that the dedicator had a nomen and cognomen. For the nomen one could think of Florentius or Florentinius.

